REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-10 and 13-15 remain in the application. It is respectfully submitted that the references do not suggest the subject invention. The Morris reference (PCT/GB94/01079) is concerned with the problem of imparting stretch in inherently rigid woven fabrics. This is achieved by compressing the woven fabric along its length and heating to impart a semi-permanent stretch. An interlining having an inherent stretch is then affixed to the fabric so making permanent the stretch imparted to the woven fabric during the first stage.

The problem associated with the previous Morris method is that interlinings have an inherent stretch are relatively expensive. The current application sets forth a solution to this problem – that of longitudinally compressing an inexpensive synthetic thermoplastic interlining and affixing it to the woven layer whilst both are in the compressed state.

When the skilled but non-inventive man is provided with Morris and faced with this problem it is unlikely that he would consider any of the three references cited by the Examiner. Even if considered as prior art, there is no teaching in any of these secondary references that would lead the skilled man to believe that by replacing the inherently elastic layer with a longitudinally compressed thermoplastic layer would overcome this problem. All of the cited references merely show use of thermoplastic layer in a longitudinally uncompressed state. In other words, even if the references could be combined, the subject invention would not be produced.

In particular, Mathis (US 5,680,653) relates to the field of surgical gown cuffs, rather than waistbands for trousers. This is not a closely related or analogous field. More

importantly, Mathis et al. does not address the problem of providing an inexpensive method of introducing stretch into inherently rigid woven materials. Mathis does not disclose a method which introduces longitudinal compression into any of the layers. The two layers are simply squeezed together as they pass through a nip point where they adhere to each other. According to the disclosure of Mathis, an outer thermoplastic water repellant layer is supported by an elastic layer which pulls the thermal plastic layer back into shape when under tension. There is no mention whatsoever of thermoplastic layers under longitudinal compression or any benefits of the properties of this material in this compressed state. Mathis does not show the use of a thermoplastic layer as a supporting interlining. The elastic layer is the supporting layer.

Accordingly, simply combining the teachings of Morris and Mathis would not lead the skilled man to the current invention, or ever result in the invention. Far more ingenuity on the part of the skilled man would be required even when provided with these two documents. In particular, it would be necessary for the skilled man to realize that the thermoplastic layer could act as a support layer for holding the composite material in shape, opposite to the way it is used in Mathis where it is the elastic layer which holds the material in shape. In addition, the skilled man would need to appreciate that the thermoplastic layer would be useful as a support layer when longitudinally compressed and thermoset. There is simply no disclosure in Mathis of longitudinal compression in this way or any advantage which would follow from it.

Similar comments apply regarding US patent 5,843,068 (Allan et al.). Again, whilst this document does disclose the use of a multi-layer material, there is no disclosure of a thermoplastic layer thermoset under longitudinal compression or any advantage this may provide. Layers are simply pressed together (column 8, lines 36-42). It is stated that

guide rollers maintain a little tension on the layers to avoid stretching (column 8, lines 46-49). There is no disclosure of longitudinal compression.

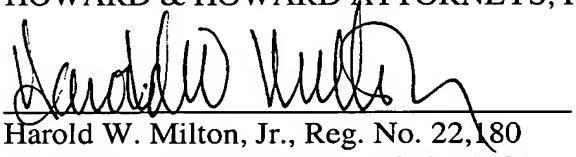
As with Mathis, this is therefore not a document which the skilled man would consider, as not only is it in a different field, there is no indication in this document of the use of a compressed thermoplastic layer or any advantage associated with it.

Finally, the Examiner relies on Nakazawa (US 4,141,082) to show that thermoplastic layers are known as interliners. This is not denied. However, what is not known and what is not taught in Nakazawa is the use of longitudinally compressed thermoplastic materials which are used to provide stretch in inherently rigid woven materials. This is not taught in Nakazawa or any other document which discloses use of thermoplastic materials.

Accordingly, it is believed that none of the documents cited by the Examiner would render the current invention obvious when combined with Morris. None of these documents appear to be closely related to the current invention.

Respectfully submitted

HOWARD & HOWARD ATTORNEYS, P.C.



October 14, 2005
Date

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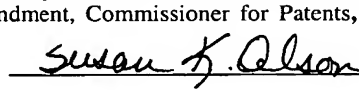 (Susan K. Olson)